

# **PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT**

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THE ROUTINE use of the Papanicolaou smear would practically eliminate cervical cancer as a cause of death, it is the belief of medical and health authorities.

A recently completed study by the health department on knowledge and utilization of the smear among a sample of Alameda County women showed that five out of every ten women 20 years and over have taken the Papanicolaou test. Three of ten said they had heard of it but had not used it. One-fifth of those questioned had never heard of the test.

There are some encouraging signs: the number of women using the test has increased in recent years, women are beginning to take the test at a younger age, and those who take it once tend to repeat it.

However, the use of the test is not general in any population group and it is particularly limited among non-white, foreign-born, and women in the lower economic stratum—the very groups among whom cervical cancer is most common.

In California alone, cervical cancer caused the death of more than 700 women in 1960. It is important that community resources be mobilized to make women aware of the importance of the test, to develop adequate facilities for it, and to provide those women who most need it with an opportunity to take it.

Not too long ago a Philadelphia research group, according to a news release, reported that influenza vaccine may produce antibodies against blood Group A, and should not be given to pregnant women because of the theoretical risk of hemolytic disease of the newborn.

Consultants to the U.S. Public Health Service pointed out that the broad antigenic properties of influenza vaccine are well known and are also common to other vaccines; that there is no evidence that hemolytic disease or other untoward reactions have occurred after its use, and pregnant women should be vaccinated as previously recommended.

It is public knowledge that the department strongly supports the recommendation of its expert advisory committee that all three types of the Sabin oral vaccine be fully used for the elimination of paralytic poliomyelitis in California.

I believe it appropriate, however, to repeat the group's second recommendation; that "it is of greatest importance to plan continuing vaccination programs to provide for the adequate immunization of the oncoming generation." Nearly 350,000 babies are born each year in California, a population which, in addition to the hundreds of newcomers who move into our state daily, will need protection against paralytic poliomyelitis.

Tuolumne County is now the 15th rural California county to take advantage of the department's Public Health Contract Services program. Office of the department will be located in Sonora, and it is anticipated that Dr. H. H. McGillis will serve as health officer.

Contract Services now provides joint state-county health programs with the counties of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Glenn, Lake, Lassen, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Sierra, Tehama, Trinity and Tuolumne.

Siskiyou County remains unique among California counties in having no organized local health services. However, it is anticipated Siskiyou will join the program in July of this year.

Federal Community Health Facilities Service Projects totaling \$2,548,000 have been awarded to six California health agencies by the U.S. Public Health Service and with the assistance of the State Health Department.

The projects include a study by Homemaker Service of Los Angeles to determine the nature and extent to which homemaker service can play a supporting role in the care and treatment of chronically ill or aged patients outside the hospital.

United Community Fund of San Francisco will provide a Central Medical Social Service Bureau. Patients are being discharged from major general hospitals without adequate planning in relation to family or home arrangements. Certain patients are not receiving medical social work which is readily available to many clinic patients. Physicians indicate many patients would have more satisfactory and rapid rehabilitation if medical social work were available.